



NHTSA

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

Recall Campaign Creative Concept Testing

2.4.2020



TABLE OF CONTENTS

3

Background

7

Detailed Findings

20

Concept Comparison

22

**Conclusions +
Strategic Imperatives**

24

**Appendix +
Demographics**

BACKGROUND



Research Objectives

Evaluate animated concepts for online banner ads with the goal of getting vehicle owners to visit NHTSA's website to check for vehicle recalls

1. Understand how well concepts motivate consumers to visit NHTSA's website and check for vehicle recalls.
2. Help select concepts most likely to increase and expedite safety recall compliance.
3. Build stronger awareness of NHTSA's resources and tools available to consumers.

Methodology

.....



Participants (n=102)

Qualification Criteria

- U.S. licensed driver
- Mix of genders (Female skew)
- Age 18+
- Own/operate a vehicle at least once per week
- Primary or shared decision-maker for vehicle maintenance in their household
- ½ of recruited participants have children under age 18 in household
- Skew towards college education or higher



MODE

Online Bulletin Board

- 3 days of activities, board open for 4 days
- Respondents split between 4 boards



LENGTH

3 days of activities

- 15-20 minutes per respondent per day
- 45-60 minutes per respondent total



DATES

January 21-25, 2020



GEOGRAPHY

Nationwide

Key Takeaways



Time Passing was selected by respondents as the most effective concept at driving consumers to the NHTSA website. The dominant visual of the vehicle pulling off the road conveys the importance of time (and getting recalls fixed) in a more relevant and relatable way than the other concepts. However, respondents indicated that this ad evolves slowly. There is an opportunity to enhance the urgency by having the vehicle pull off more suddenly, resulting in a cloud of dust and showing smoke coming from under the hood. Adding "safety" to recalls increases the weight of the message and adds a sense of severity to the recall.



Hourglass also performs well at driving desired behavior but is less compelling when compared directly to *Time Passing*. *Hourglass* has a heavy focus on time but is more conceptual. There is some confusion around the message of "borrowed time" and consumers are responsible for having to connect the dots between borrowed time and safety recalls. Adding a concrete consequence, such as one found in *Time Passing*, and specifying "safety" will help improve the concept.



Gamble falls short of the other two concepts in driving desired action. While the color red and dice imagery grab attention and convey risk, it isn't always clear what the nature of the risk is. The risk is not clearly connected to recalls and is perceived as a wide range of possibilities from gambling addiction to driving under the influence.

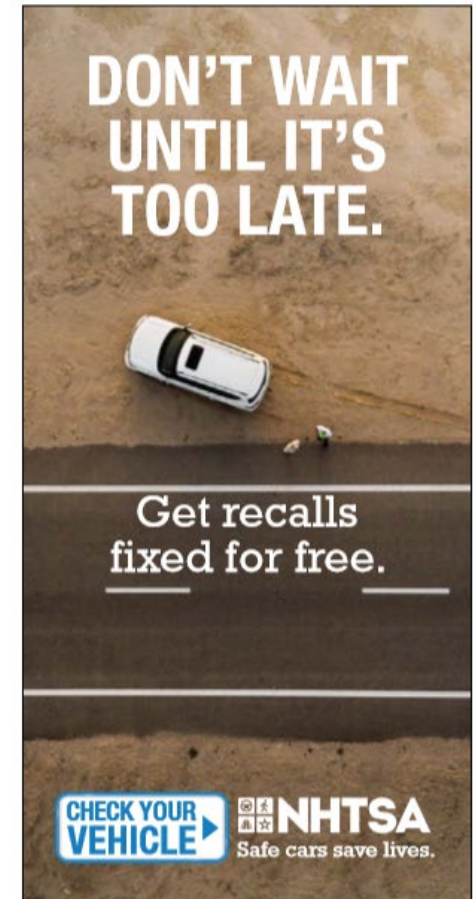
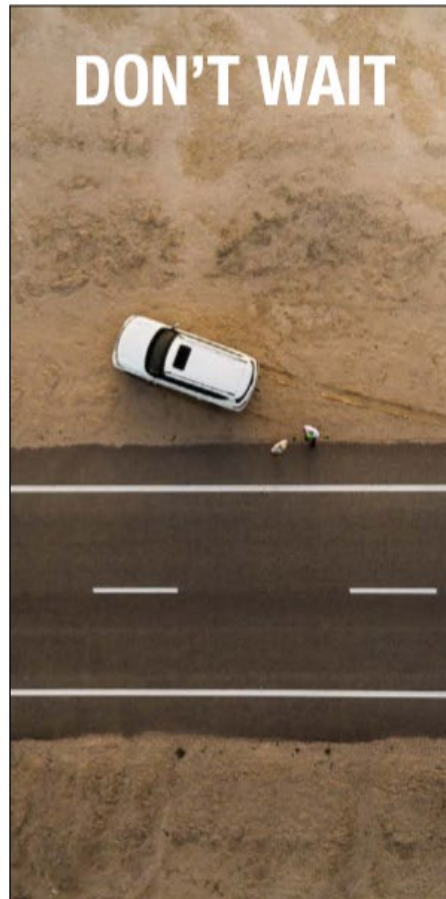
DETAILED FINDINGS

*Concept by Concept
Analysis*

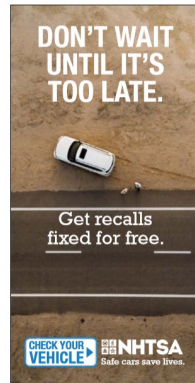
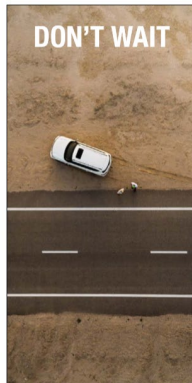


Time Passing

.....

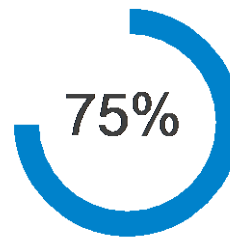


Time Passing



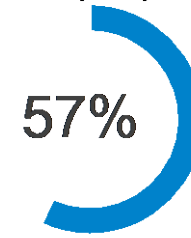
Likely to act

% Somewhat/Very/
Extremely Likely



Likely to visit site

% Somewhat/Very/
Extremely Likely



Most likely to
visit NHTSA.gov



Main Message

%

Don't wait to have recalls fixed 43%

Unfixed recalls can lead to you being stranded 19%

Unfixed recalls can lead to vehicle failure 15%

Grabs Attention

%

Car off road 40%

"Don't wait until it's too late" text 29%

Desert environment 6%

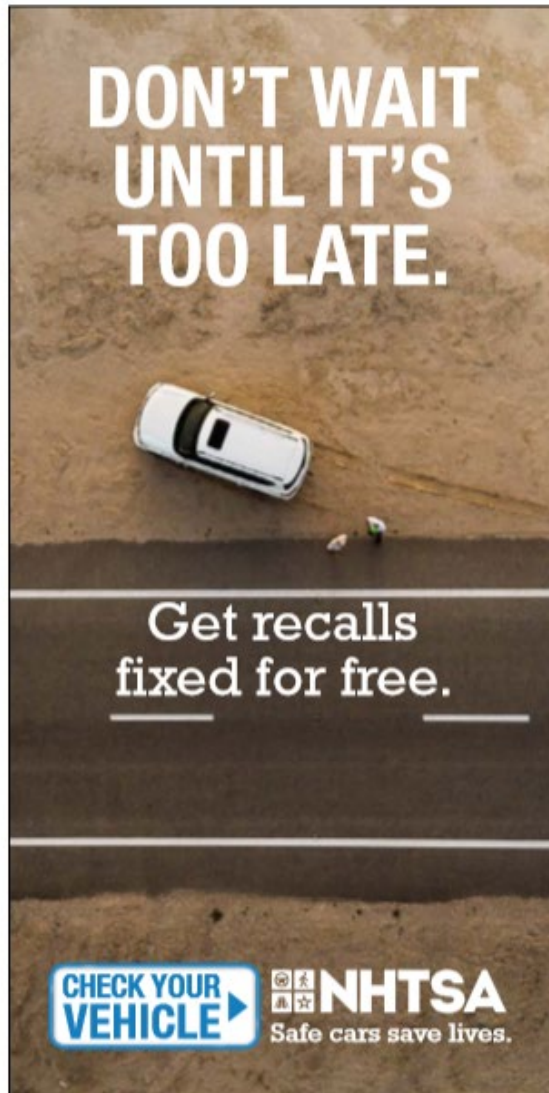
Free repair 6%

*"To me the **main message** of this concept is **don't wait to have recall issues fixed** because if you don't it **may be too late** as in you could **break down** or something worse."*

*"The **main concept** of this image is that **you shouldn't wait too long** before getting your car fixed after it has been recalled. **You never know when the issue will become a real issue.**"*

*"This one **did grab my attention**. The **car driving off the road** and the words, 'Don't wait until it's too late' were a **good visual**."*

Time Passing



Likes	%
Visuals/relatable Situation	24%
Conveyed a sense of urgency	15%
Free repair	12%

*"I like how the image scrolls down the road from the start, the visual of the tracks in the dirt as the car pulls off, and the hazard lights. **This is a more compelling visual** than the hourglass."*

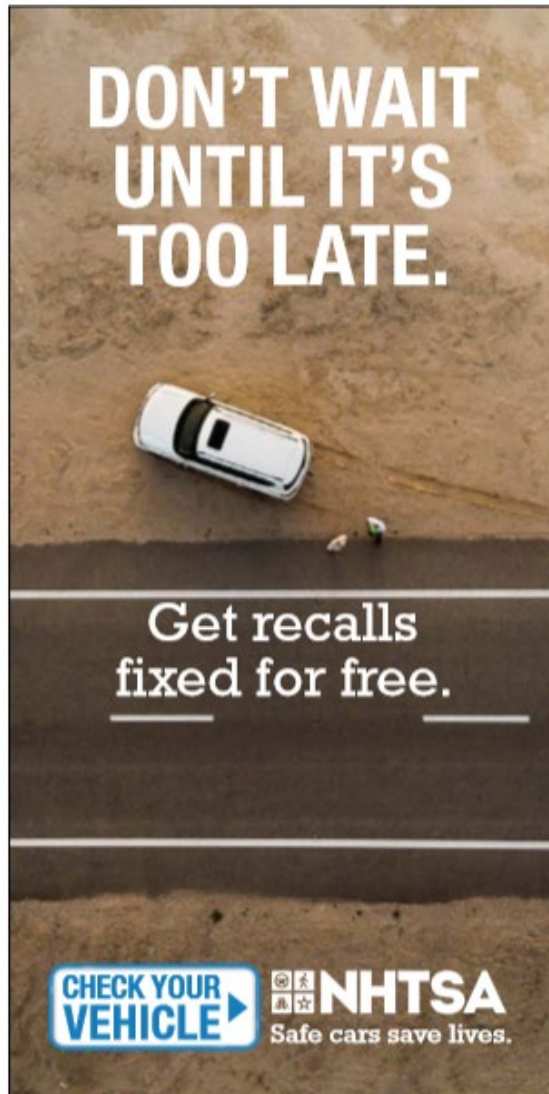
*"I like this ad because it **gave me a sense of urgency** to investigate the website and **find out more about recall information** overall, especially for my specific vehicle."*

Dislikes	%
Dull/uninteresting	13%
Lack of detail	9%
Too long for relevant message	9%
No dislikes about this ad	30%

*"It was **too slow**. Kind of boring to be honest."*

*"I **dislike the vagueness** of this ad. **Hard to tell** what the main purpose is of the ad."*

Time Passing



Enhancement Opportunities

- Convey a greater sense of urgency (i.e. smoke emitting from the car, erratic stop)
- Increase “human value” factor (i.e. show faces, emphasize inconvenience of the situation)
- Make ad faster/bring words in faster
- Add “safety” in front of “recalls”

“The only thing I would change is maybe have someone in the ad, looking miserable and stuck on the side of the road, all because they didn't get their recall issues fixed. That might be a good image too.”


*“The only thing that I dislike about this concept is that it **should give a little more information regarding recalls** earlier in the video. Maybe a logo or something regarding recalls should be placed at the bottom of the screen.”*

*“The **ONLY** thing **missing is the word ‘safety.’** Otherwise, I like it.”*

*“I think it grabs your attention...**might be more dramatic if it ended with smoke coming out of engine.**”*


Hourglass


.....



**ARE YOU DRIVING ON
BORROWED TIME?**

Get recalls
fixed for free.

**CHECK YOUR
VEHICLE** 

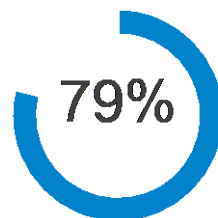
 **NHTSA**
Safe cars save lives.

Hourglass



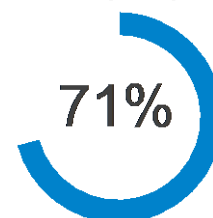
Likely to act

% Somewhat/Very/
Extremely Likely

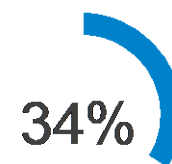


Likely to visit site

% Somewhat/Very/
Extremely Likely



Most likely to
visit NHTSA.gov



Main Message

%

Recalls are a safety issue 22%

Free repair 21%

Car will not work if you
don't get recall fixed 13%

Grabs Attention

%

Hourglass imagery 32%

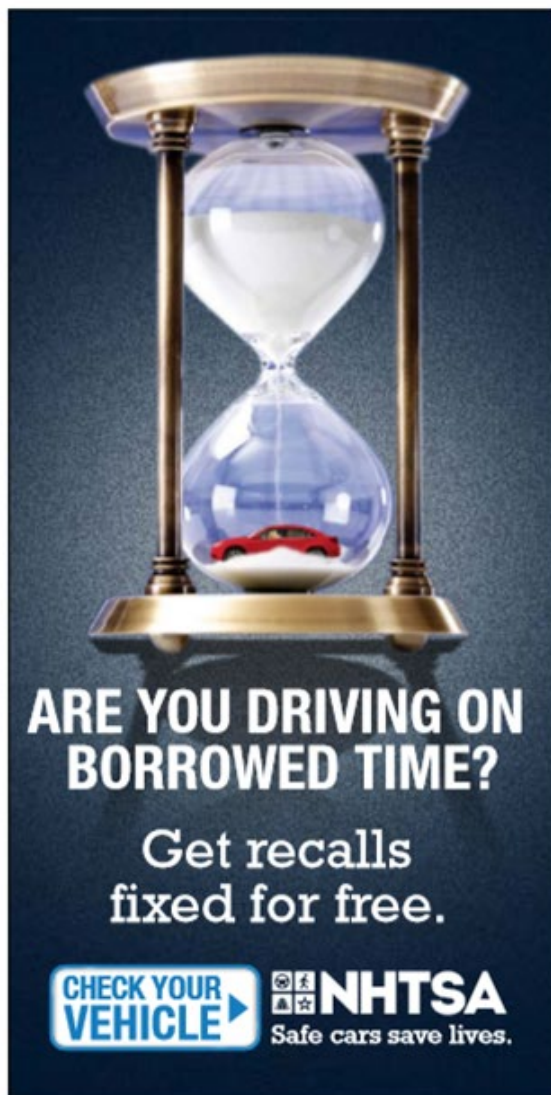
"Are you driving on
borrowed time? text 20%

The vehicle 8%

*"I think the **main message** is that if your car has a recall, it's probably dangerous and could kill you, and it's encouraging you to check if your car has a recall on it, and if so, get it fixed for free asap."*

*"I would say the image in an hourglass that is running out creates a sense of urgency for the viewer. That sense is **solidified** by the text that reads 'Are you driving on borrowed time?' The message is boldly stated in my opinion."*

Hourglass



Likes	%
Car in hourglass	20%
Simple, to the point	17%
Free repair	15%

"I really like the illustration of the car in the hourglass with the related caption asking if you are running on borrowed time...it is a big plus that this concept lets you know that you can have the recalls completed free."

"It's pretty simple and gets right to the point which is nice. It's not making me watch something I'd probably just ignore."

Dislikes	%
Confusing/unclear	14%
Hourglass is dated concept	12%
Lacks details	10%
No dislikes about this ad	25%

"I was confused at first about what the hourglass represented. I thought it had something to do with how long I was going to live."

"As I mentioned before, I think the hourglass is a bit of a dated concept."

Hourglass



Enhancement Opportunities

- Change background colors to appear less dark/ominous
- Update hourglass imagery to something more modern
- Add “now” or other text to create a greater sense of urgency

*“I dislike the hourglass with the car in it because **it doesn't make me think of vehicle recall**. The written part that says ‘Are you driving on borrowed time?’, it makes me think about purchasing a new car because mine is wearing out.”*

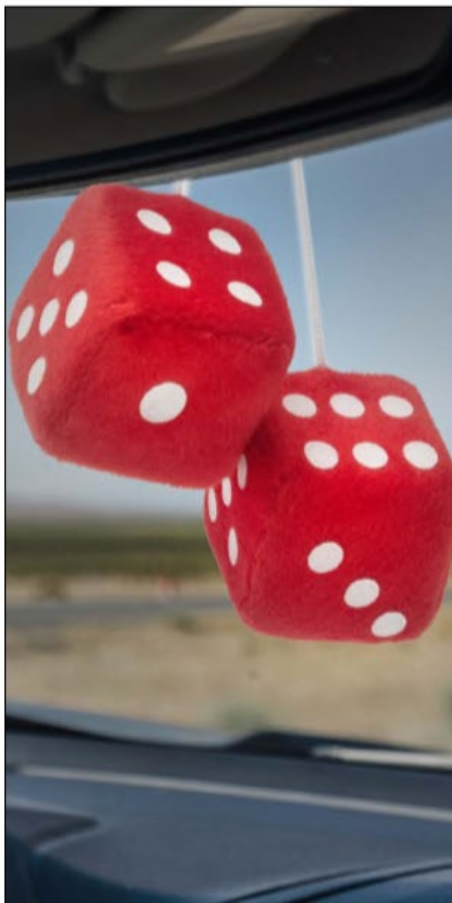
*“The **car inside the hourglass** was a bit pointless. ‘Are you driving on borrowed time?’ could be changed to a more related question about recalls being fixed for free.”*

*“What I dislike about this concept is the **gloomy colors**. Although it does go along with the theme, I would recommend colors that “pop” more.”*

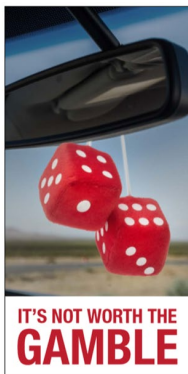
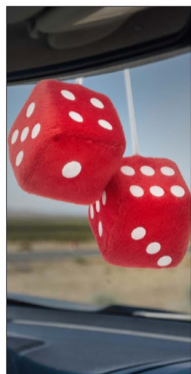
*“It's **pretty negative**. I get that it's supposed to get my attention, but it is almost too negative. **Not crazy about the hourglass.**”*

Gamble

.....



Gamble



Likely to act

% Somewhat/Very/
Extremely Likely

51%

Likely to visit site

% Somewhat/Very/
Extremely Likely

47%

Most likely to
visit NHTSA.gov

16%

Main Message

%

Not checking/fixing
recalls is a gamble

41%

Check for recalls

17%

Free repair

15%

Grabs Attention

%

Dice

35%

"Gamble" text

18%

Red colors

11%

*"The ad seems to be saying **why gamble with the safety of your vehicle** when you can go to the **website** for information about safety vehicle recall and **get it done for free** otherwise you are **taking a chance you don't have to take**. In gambling the odds are always stacked up against you."*

*"It grabs my attention because **the red color makes you want to look at it** since its so bright. The **dice** grab my attention and **'GAMBLE'** does too."*

Gamble



IT'S NOT WORTH THE
GAMBLE

Get recalls
fixed for free.

CHECK YOUR
VEHICLE ►

 **NHTSA**
Safe cars save lives.

Likes	%
Dice imagery	22%
Message is good/relatable	18%
Clear, simple	15%

*"I like the use of the colorful dice and the phrase, 'It's not worth the gamble.' It makes it **very clear** what is being discussed."*

*"It's an **obvious message**, and it looks **important**. The incentive of it being **free** makes something important look **even more appealing**."*

Dislikes	%
Irrelevant/unclear message	24%
Dice imagery	15%
Visual layout	9%
No dislikes about this ad	22%

*"I **dislike that the dice can also serve to be confusing** because that's all we can see initially - we **don't see a car, person, or even an accident**."*

*"The **ad does not show a vehicle in distress or the website**. The **message is not clear**."*

Gamble



Enhancement Opportunities

- Look for ways to connect dice imagery to repairing recalls
- Put objects in background past windshield (car crash, etc.) to better convey risk/threats

"I don't think the background is visually appealing, it is just a dashboard. Also the wording is not as clear as it could be."

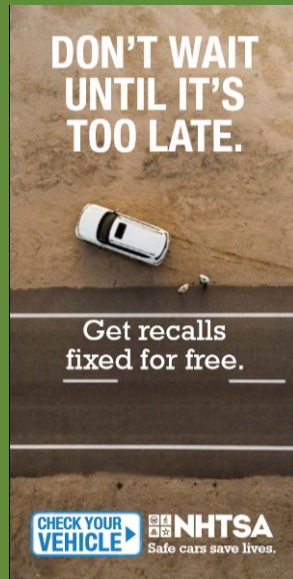
"I'm not sure it's the right message for recalls. I want to see an exploding airbag... The dice indicate luck. Not safety."

"It's too basic and there are no cars shown. How would a pair of dice entice a consumer to want to hurry up and check for their recalls? It doesn't seem urgent at all."

"It's tough to connect the dice to something going wrong with my car. Many people will not get the gambling reference and this whole concept won't fit for them."

CONCEPT COMPARISON





Time Passing



Hourglass



Gamble

■ = highest among concepts
■ = lowest among concepts

Most likely to visit NHTSA.gov

50%

34%

16%

Likely to take action (Somewhat/Very/Extremely Likely)

57%

71%

47%

Likely to visit website (Somewhat/Very/Extremely Likely)

75%

79%

51%

Q3.1 – Which concept makes you **MOST** likely to visit the NHTSA.gov website to check for information about safety recalls on a vehicle?

Q1.17a/2.6a/2.14a – How likely would you be to take some kind of action after seeing this concept?

Q1.18/2.7/2.15 - Assuming you saw this concept as a banner ad, how likely would you be to visit the NHTSA.gov website to check for a vehicle air bag safety recall?

CONCLUSIONS + RECOMMENDATIONS



Conclusions + Recommendations

- Thinking of recalls in general (outside of reactions to the concepts), “Safety” + “Free” help to drive motivation and reduce barriers to having recalls repaired.
- Time Passing and Hourglass are the most effective at driving desired action; Time Passing offers a more relevant example of why time is important (and the visual of getting stranded strikes an emotional chord with consumers).
- Gamble lacks clarity of what the nature of the risks are, leaves too much for the consumer to interpret.

Prioritize and focus on refinements to *Time Passing* and *Hourglass*. Both concepts can be improved by linking “safety” to recall as that tends to motivate consumers to have recalls repaired sooner rather than later. It is also important to continue to drive home the message that recalls are repaired for free as consumers are not universally aware of that fact.

APPENDIX



Motivations for Taking Action on Recalls

Consumers are more likely to get their recalls repaired if the unattended recall can cause harm to themselves or their passengers. Convenience around the repair is also important, as this requires time and energy that can be spent doing something else.

Themes	%
May injure myself or others	25%
Convenience (timeline, dealership location/appt. availability, loaner car, etc.)	20%
Severity of recall (safety concerns, certain parts, etc.)	18%
Statistics/facts/anecdotes of what could happen if recall is unattended	8%

*“If the issue was stated as being **potentially dangerous**, I would be **motivated to take it to be fixed asap**. I would expect the **necessary parts and labor involved to be fully paid for by the vehicle manufacturer**. Most important to me is the **safety of myself and passengers**, and I believe recalls should be readily available for a consumer to view.”*

*“I would like to receive a letter from the **manufacturer explaining what is wrong and how long the repair is likely to take**. Also, I would like them to give me a **list of close dealerships** that I could go to and **if those dealerships offered a loaner or a ride**.”*

Recent News About Recalls

.....

2 out of 5 people in this audience have not heard anything about recalls recently. Those who did were likely to hear or see it from a news source, such as TV, online, or social media. Some have even received recall notices in the mail at some point.

Themes	%
Heard about it online/in the news/on social media	25%
Received recall notice in the mail	18%
I have not heard anything recently	40%

*"I believe it was on my **Facebook feed** as an ad/story about Nissan and the recall of a lot of vehicles due to defective airbags."*

*"I have seen some safety recalls actually. One on Ford 150, I think it had something to do with the door of the bed in the back. I seen it **on the news**."*

*"Yes, I have read about a brake recall on certain Ford and Mercury vehicles. It was from an **email** I received **from the NHTSA**."*

*"Yes. I owned a 2005 Audi A4 and got a recall in 2019 about air bags. I received a **notice via USPS** and I **went online to research it some more**."*

*"I have seen things regarding certain recalls on my mom's ford escape and she **received a letter from Ford** directly."*

Sources for Recall Information

Consumers go straight to their computers when they want to find out more information about recalls. The NHTSA site is relatively well known, but most people will just do a simple Google search.



Web search (Google)

32%



OEM (website/call)

26%



Dealership

15%



NHTSA or other
government body

9%



Postal mail

8%

“Straight to Google. I’d search it up and do my own investigation.”

“I use Google for it too because it can be quicker than typing in your VIN on the site.”

*“I would go to either the **manufacturer’s website**, a website ran by the **National Highway Traffic Safety Admin.**, or a **brand dealership’s FAQ page**.”*

*“Recall notices, if I have received one. otherwise I will **search on Google** for recalls related to my vehicle. I will click on **manufacturer or NHTSA website for authoritative information**.”*

*“I would contact my **dealership and salesman directly** if I heard of any recalls on my car to find out the details.”*

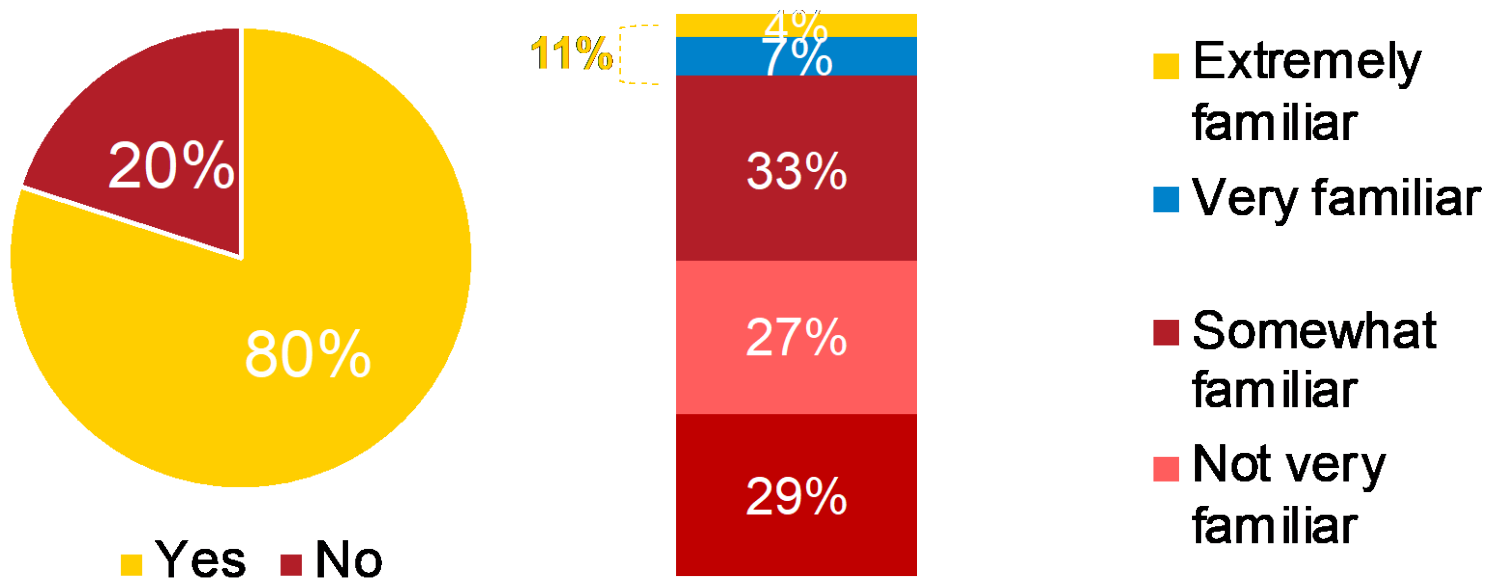
*“Usually I am **notified by mail by my dealer**. However, there are websites that you can check for recalls. **Recalls.gov** has all the latest recalls for your vehicle, I believe you can do a search by your VIN number.”*

*“I would only find out about vehicle safety recalls if a **letter** was sent to me about it. Maybe I’d respond to an email but not sure.”*

*only entries with more than 5% shown

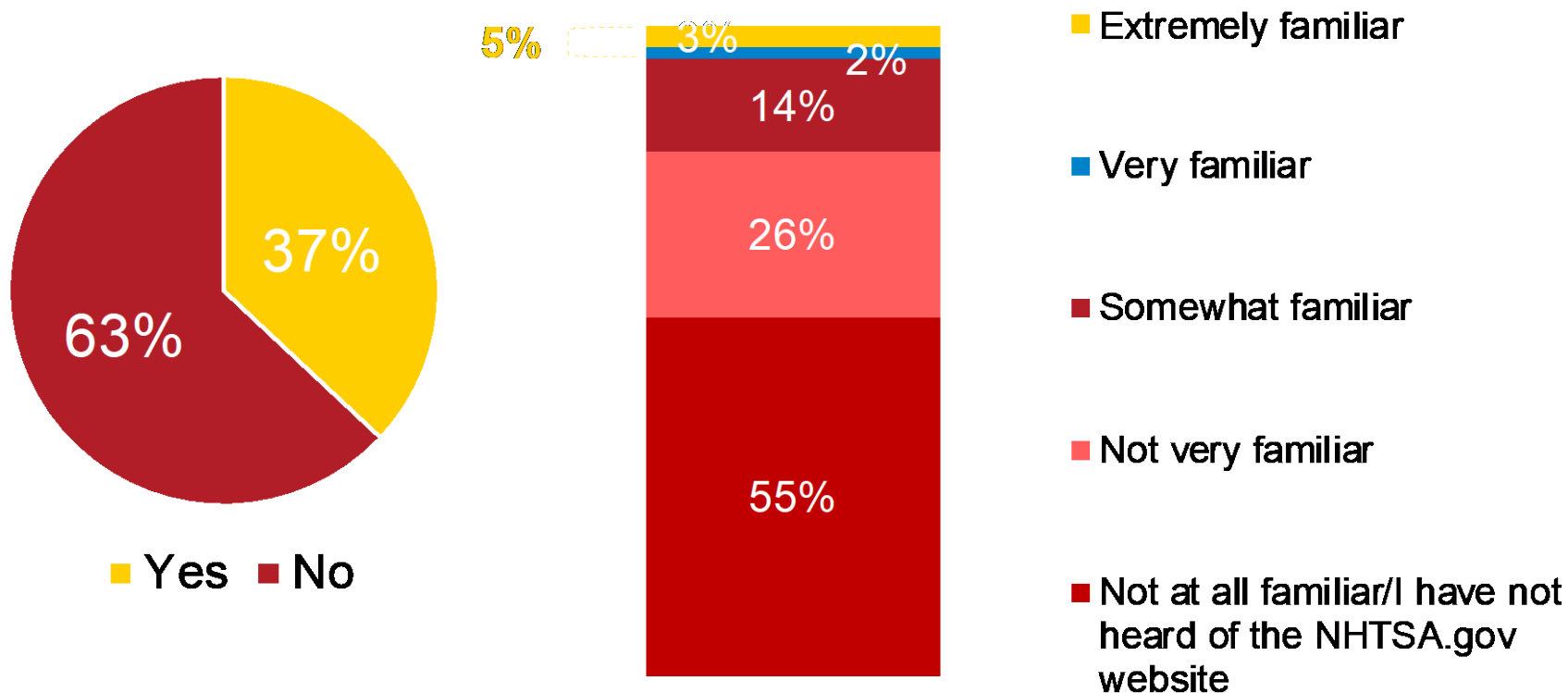
Familiarity with NHTSA

Many people have heard of NHTSA, but aren't familiar with what they do.



Familiarity with NHTSA.gov

Consumers aren't familiar with NHTSA.gov, and fewer are very or extremely familiar with the site.



NHTSA in the News

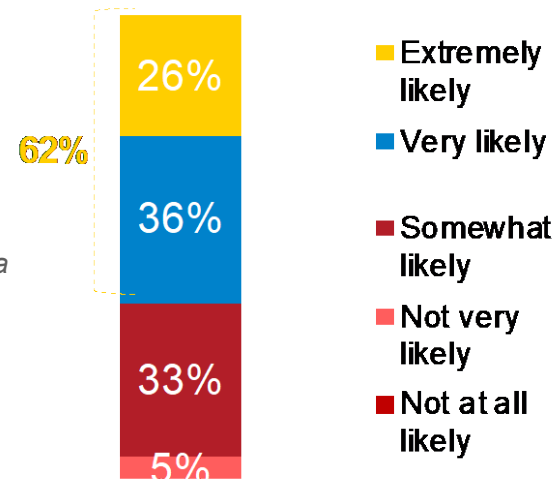
While many have heard of NHTSA, only a few can remember specific news. This goes to show that most have heard of NHTSA in passing – but aren't familiar with what they do. Those who did remember were likely to source the news and generally think of NHTSA as in charge of crash investigations and recalls.

Themes	%
Yes, I heard something on the news	10%
Yes (General)	6%
Yes, I know about them from a previous recall	5%
I have not heard anything about NHTSA recently	73%

"I remember reading of a terrible limo accident in NY and reading the article it spoke about the **NHTSA on site investigating the crash**. Also, the article showed pictures on people wearing NHTSA jackets collecting evidence and data at the crash site."

"Especially regarding the recent **TESLA autopilot crashes**, they have been very active."

"Yes, I looked up more information on the site **regarding the Takata airbag recall** due to my own vehicle being affected."



DEMOGRAPHICS



Demographics - Recruited

		TOTAL
Gender	Male	47%
	Female	53%
Age	18-34	38%
	35-54	44%
	55+	18%
Ethnicity	White	66%
	Black	13%
	Hispanic	13%
	Other	8%
Education	HS or less	10%
	Vocational/some college	37%
	Bachelor's	32%
	Post Bachelor's	22%
Household Income	Less than \$50K	34%
	\$50K - \$99 K	33%
	\$100K+	33%

		TOTAL
9 Point Census Region	New England	12%
	Middle Atlantic	13%
	South Atlantic	13%
	East South Central	6%
	West South Central	10%
	East North Central	13%
	West North Central	11%
	Mountain	8%
	Pacific	14%
Children <18 In household	Yes, children < 18 in HH	50%
	No children < 18 in HH	50%